

## **MEETING NOTES**

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Date: September 25, 2008**

#### **Attendees:**

##### *Members:*

Monroe Wooton, R.S. Cooper & Associates Realty  
Henry Porter, Jr., Southwest Community Association  
Paul Zimmerman, Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing

##### *Other Attendees:*

Ellen Fitzgerald, PSOMAS  
Kenneth Quan, PSOMAS  
Paria Kooklan, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority  
Sarah Dimson, Los Angeles Community Design Center

##### *Board of Supervisors:*

Julie Moore, Fourth Supervisorial District

##### *Department of Regional Planning:*

Rose Hamilton, Advance Planning Division  
Ron Hoffman, Housing Section  
Connie Chung, Housing Section  
Tina Fung, Housing Section  
Anne Russett, Housing Section  
Gretchen Siemers, Housing Section  
Alejandrina Baldwin, Land Divisions Section

##### *Other County Departments:*

Ariel Palomares, Public Works, Building and Safety  
Juan Padilla, Los Angeles County Fire Department, Land Development  
Pansy Yee, Community Development Commission  
Jacqueline Rodarte, Community Development Commission

## **Introductions**

Welcoming comments from Connie Chung, Department of Regional Planning.

Ms. Chung informed the Committee that the Los Angeles County Housing Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 6, 2008.

Ms. Chung introduced Tina Fung from the Department of Regional Planning Housing Section and Alejandrina Baldwin from the Land Divisions Section.

## **Presentation**

### *Los Angeles County Subdivision Process*

Ms. Baldwin outlined the County's current subdivision process. Subdivision applications are a two-step process consisting of a Tentative map and then a Final map. Depending on the type of project proposed, either a Parcel Map or Tract Map is filed. Parcel Maps, or Minor Land Divisions, are needed for projects of four units or less; commercial and industrial subdivisions with four lots or less; parcels with a gross area of 20 acres or more with access to a public street; all parcels with a gross area of 40 acres or more; and reversion to acreage or merger. A Tract Map, or Major Land Division, is required when there are more than four lots or units.

Either a Parcel Map or Tract Map can be submitted for residential, commercial, industrial, or any combination thereof. Different types of subdivisions include: condominium projects (multiple units on one lot, subdivision of air space, common land ownership); condominium conversions; reversion to acreage or merger; lease or finance projects; and lease projects.

Additional entitlements might be required, such as a Zone Change, Local Plan Amendment, General Plan Amendment, Conditional Use Permit, Oak Tree Permit, or Housing Permit. All associated entitlements to the project are processed concurrently with the tentative map by the Land Divisions Section of Regional Planning.

### **Tentative map procedures**

According to Ms. Baldwin, Regional Planning recommends that applicants meet with staff prior to designing a tentative map and filing the project. At a One-Stop Counseling session, information regarding the process and applicable regulations are discussed.

Soon after the filing of a subdivision project or revision to a pending project, maps and project materials distributed to the Subdivision Committee, and scheduled for a Subdivision Committee Meeting ("SCM"). This Committee is composed of the Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Health Services and Department of Regional Planning. Regional Planning acts as the Chair of the Committee. During this meeting, the project undergoes a thorough technical review for all applicable regulations, including the Subdivision Map Act, the Permit Streamlining Act, the Countywide General Plan/Community Plan/Specific Plans and the County Code.

The project is then reviewed by the applicable hearing body. If the tentative map is approved, the map and its associated permits expire within three years, per recent changes to State law. In certain circumstances, applicants may request extensions to the expiration date.

## Final Map and Parcel Map Waivers

Ms. Baldwin explained that all tract maps require a final map to be filed prior to tentative map expiration. Certain parcel maps may be granted a parcel map waiver (PMW) instead of requiring a final map. Parcel map waivers are generally only granted in flat non-urban areas where no dedications or improvements are required. A final map must be prepared by a licensed surveyor or registered civil engineer. Final maps must be recorded prior to tentative map expiration.

The Department of Public Works accepts Final Maps, and submits them to the Subdivision Committee to ensure that all tentative map conditions are addressed. If there are concurrent discretionary permits, those conditions must also be addressed. At this time, all required improvements must be constructed or installed, or the improvements must be bonded for with Public Works. Before the final map can be recorded, all departments must approve the map, and the Board of Supervisors must approve the map at a public hearing.

## Fees

Ms. Baldwin provided an overview of the various fees that are required at the time of filing a tentative map, including a deposit and application fees. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> map revision, each subsequent revision is assessed an additional fee. There are additional fees for DPW review of certain plans and reports.

Prior and subsequent to filing the final map, required fees include a deposit for review of final map or parcel map waiver, construction and/or bonding and/or fees for required improvements, Quimby fees, school district fees, library facility fees, and fees for other agencies, facilities and services, as applicable.

## *Other Local Jurisdictions*

Ms. Fung presented an analysis of subdivision procedures in other local jurisdictions. Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, as well as the City of Riverside, each have an advisory committee comprised of technical experts, who review the initial map for compliance with regulations.

## City of Los Angeles

The City of LA has a subdivision procedure to allow smaller subdivisions. The City's Small Lot Ordinance permits the subdivision of multi-family and commercially zoned properties into small, fee simple single family lots by reducing the minimum lot size and side yard requirements, and eliminating requirements for conventional street frontage. The intent of the ordinance is to reduce the cost of home ownership and generate creative housing solutions. Under this ordinance, the dwelling units can be townhomes, bungalow courtyard style or other configurations, as long as each structure, from the foundation to the roof, is separate and independent on its own. The ordinance does not apply to single family zones.

## Riverside

Ms. Chung described the City of Riverside's Planned Development Residential Permit, which is intended to facilitate the development of small-lot infill subdivisions in existing single family

neighborhoods. This discretionary procedure permits small-lots in all zones that permit single family residential except at the lowest density, RA-5. By encouraging more creative and imaginative project design, a greater development density may be achieved. In return, planned residential developments are required to incorporate amenities and superior design features not normally required of standard single-family residential developments. Up to a 20% density bonus for "superior design" including the provision of amenities, pedestrian friendliness, retention of unique natural features. A Parcel Map is still required, and development standards supersede development standards in the underlying base zone.

## **Discussion**

Meeting attendees agreed that local jurisdictions should treat affordable housing projects differently in the subdivision review process. The group identified case processing times as the most significant barrier to housing development in the unincorporated areas. Ms. Baldwin noted that subdivision processing times often exceed two years, with larger projects sometimes extending to ten years. State law requires a 30 day review window, unless the application is deemed incomplete. In addition to the complicated nature of the projects, the comprehensive review procedures and mandated State time limits, limited staff resources and a case backlog have posed significant challenges for Regional Planning.

The Committee suggested that affordable housing cases be expedited, as well as cases for housing for persons with disabilities. Ms. Chung indicated that cases that are subsidized by the Community Development Commission are prioritized, yet in some cases may face significant processing times, as there are limited staff resources. The forthcoming reasonable accommodations ordinance may be a vehicle for developers of housing for persons with disabilities to request expediting if case processing times are an impediment to housing access. Ms. Chung also noted that the recently adopted Housing Element includes a program whereby an inter-departmental committee could facilitate the development process of affordable housing.

Committee members noted that there are timeframe constraints when financing non-profit housing and that the County's delays may impede the development of tax-credit projects. Committee members also noted the political considerations that influence case processing times.

Committee members discussed the issue of case expediting available for market-rate development projects. Other local jurisdictions utilize a fee-based expediting process, with or without a minimum quota component. Committee members commented that the County's long processing times can cause developers to be disinterested in projects in the unincorporated areas. Ms. Chung responded that this has been considered, yet there have been questions of fairness raised because many applicants are not in the position to afford an additional fee. Ms. Chung noted that DRP is completing a report on how to streamline the entitlement process; Committee members indicated that they will like to see the final report. Staff committed to inviting the planners preparing this report at a future meeting.

Another barrier in the County's subdivision process that was discussed is the Lease Only Map. This is a subdivision needed when developing rental housing comprised of two or more detached buildings. Other local jurisdictions do not have this requirement.

The Committee discussed examples of small-lot developments in the Los Angeles area. Homes at 1002 Leighton in Los Angeles, for example, were developed by using the City of Los Angeles small lot subdivision ordinance and design guidelines, and in consultation with Enterprise

Community Partners. Committee members noted that with higher densities and smaller lots than typical single family homes, buyers in Southern California are not yet comfortable with the new design.

Committee members discussed the need for flexibility in development standards and design to implement a small lot subdivision policy. Parking standards may need to allow tandem parking. Driveways may need to be shared. Flag lot development, which has been traditionally discouraged in the unincorporated areas, may need to be analyzed for impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Fire Department staff noted the importance of access to the structure and to hydrants, when designing standards for small lot developments. Also, the building code needs to be reviewed for any policies regarding setbacks, ventilation and windows, etc.

The County may need to identify a mechanism to allow the maintenance of shared courtyards and driveways. However, the CDC staff added the importance of avoiding situations with additional fees and owner costs, which would counter the intent of a small lot subdivision policy.

The Committee discussed the potential zones in which this ordinance would apply. CDC staff encourages the policy to be applicable in R-1 zones. As this would increase densities, good design and the benefits of density are important to communicate in the development of the policy.

### **Conclusion**

Ms. Chung provided a quick update on the Housing Element plans for implementation. Outreach for the Reasonable Accommodation ordinance is underway, as well as the initial stages of preparation of the feasibility studies for Small Lot Subdivision and Inclusionary Housing programs. Anne Russett of the Housing Section provided a brief update on the status of the Farmworker Housing Ordinance, and Gretchen Siemers of the Housing Section provided an overview of some recently adopted legislation that will affect housing planning.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for **February 12, 2009, from 9:00am – 11:00am** (refreshments will be provided beginning at 8:30am) and will be held at the **Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 864, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.**

Should you have any questions, please contact Connie Chung at (213) 974-6425 or by e-mail at [cchung@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:cchung@planning.lacounty.gov)

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